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ABSTRACT

This case study was prepared in conjunction with a Unesco survey of its member states concerning educational services for individuals with handicaps. The report discusses Yugoslavia's special education policy, legislation, administration and organization, special educational provision, finance, research and development, voluntary organizations, parents, and issues. Education of handicapped children and youth in Yugoslavia is conceived as a part of a single educational system based on the assumptions that: (1) education must as far as possible be adapted to each individual's potentialities and limitations; (2) handicapped children and youth must be offered some form of education as early as possible; (3) handicapped children and youth must participate in appropriate educational activities; and (4) educational aims are the same for both handicapped and non-handicapped students. While the report notes that facilities provided to ensure a normal life for the handicapped are inadequate, improvements in the field of special education are outlined. (JDD)

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A Case Study on Special Education

in

YUGOSLAVIA

UNESCO
1988

EC 232680

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A Case Study on Special Education in YUGOSLAVIA

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ED.88/WS/11

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Preface

With a view to updating information on the present situation of special education in Member States in 1986-1987, Unesco undertook a review of the legislation, administration and financing of facilities and services for the education of disabled persons.

The information was collected in two ways.

First, sixty countries from the different regions of the world completed a questionnaire; their replies were reproduced and analysed, and can be found in a Unesco document: *A Review of the Present Situation of Special Education*. Second, twelve countries prepared each a case study which further elaborates and complements information contained in the questionnaire. These have been reproduced individually.

While the compiled information provides an indication of progress made since the first study published by Unesco in 1971, *A Study of the Present Situation of Special Education*, it is also intended to provide a data base from which future programmes could grow. Thus the information will be of assistance to policy-makers, planners, administrators and specialists in special education and will hopefully foster the exchange of experiences and lead to increased education provision for disabled persons.

The case studies, prepared under contract with Unesco, should be considered as information documents requiring continual revision and updating. A list of the countries which contributed case studies, as well as those which replied to the questionnaire appear on the preceding page.

The views expressed in this study are those of the individuals concerned with its preparation and do not necessarily reflect those of Unesco.

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SECTION I. SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

Education of handicapped children and youth in Yugoslavia is conceived as a part of a single educational system based on the assumption that: (1) education of handicapped children and youth must as far as possible be adapted to each individual's potentialities and limitations; (2) handicapped children and youth must be offered some form of education as early as possible; (3) handicapped children and youth must participate in the appropriate educational activities; (4) educational aims are the same for both handicapped and non-handicapped students.

This approach clearly indicates that there are no obstacles in Yugoslavia to the internationally accepted obligation to provide the most suitable conditions for handicapped students. Nonetheless, there is increasing dissatisfaction with the current status of this field of education among scientists and educational specialists and with the condition of governmental and other institutions. Although there has been an objective improvement in the field (legal regulations concerning handicapped persons are to be extended, together with the network of institutions involved in early rehabilitational programmes for handicapped children; there is a growing number of specialized staff in this field; increasing efforts are being made to achieve greater integration of handicapped persons in educational and labour activities), it must be recognized that the facilities actually provided to ensure a normal life for the handicapped are inadequate.

In general, it may be said that social commitment and the accepted system of values are appropriate but that the everyday existence of the handicapped is influenced by numerous uncontrolled factors ranging from their family circumstances to community attitudes. The interaction of these factors, or more precisely, their pattern in each individual case, determines the concrete effect of the social commitment to care for the handicapped. Nor are all regions equally successful in applying the basic concept and there is a further difference between urban and rural areas.

The social commitment which determines the living conditions of the handicapped has been used to evaluate the current situation and it may be said that the basic social prerequisites for such commitment are almost fulfilled. The Constitution of Yugoslavia and the Constitutions of its Republics and Provinces clearly stipulate the right of the handicapped to education under optimal conditions. Following on the 10th Congress of the

Communist League of Yugoslavia, all key Party documents reaffirmed that right and full legal provision is made in this connection. However, studies of the real state of affairs in this area lead to largely negative evaluations.

Among the factors which most significantly affect the care and protection provided for the handicapped, *economic* differences between the republics and provinces as well as between regions within these administrative divisions play an important part. The degree of economic development does not only influence the material facilities in support of social care for the handicapped, but also the overall quality of such care.

There is no permanent federal committee for education so that special education, like the educational system in general, comes under the republican and provincial committees for education or offices for education while employment is the responsibility of the labour committees. Medical protection and early rehabilitation activities as well as categorizing of handicapped children and provision of social welfare are the responsibility of republican/provincial committees for health and social policy. The 'self-managing community of interest' (for health, elementary and specialized education, pensions and invalids' welfare, children's welfare and labour) provides resources for the institutions involved. An effective functional linkage between these sub-systems is a key element but a conference organized in 1985 revealed that not one republic was fully satisfied with the extent of this functional linkage although there were considerable differences of evaluation among regions.

The peoples of Yugoslavia have the constitutional right to education in their mother tongue. Hence, education is provided in three Slavic languages (Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and Macedonian) and in a number of languages of the national minorities living in the country (Albanian and Hungarian being the most widespread non-Slavic languages). This gives rise to numerous problems in respect of the education of handicapped children and youth, because non-Slavic teachers, textbooks, etc., are not readily available.

These problems have been fully recognized and solutions sought in a variety of ways at the level of republics and provinces: the Decade of the Invalid operates at federal and provincial level; the republican and provincial offices for education have a permanent board comprising counsellors for special education; humanitarian organizations function at

federal level; there is a federal association of professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation of the handicapped.

SECTION II. LEGISLATION

Legal and self-management regulations governing education as well as other forms of protection and care for the handicapped are based on the Yugoslav Federal Constitution and the Republican and Provincial Constitutions, legal regulations and other self-management political acts and 'self-managing communities of interest'. Development of legislative and self-managing regulations for rehabilitation of the handicapped can be divided into several periods:

- from the end of the Second World War (1945) to 1958;
- from 1958 to 1963;
- from 1963 to 1974;
- from 1974 to the present.

During the *first period* (1945-1958) there were no special legal regulations for the education and rehabilitation of the handicapped and such regulations as there were concentrated on the welfare and rehabilitation of war wounded. In the *second period* (1958-1963), attention was given to other categories of the handicapped who were trained in various skills and enabled to participate actively in social life. Their vocational training became a responsibility of the state. The *third period* (1963-1974) of legislative provisions in this field began with the new Yugoslav Federal Constitution and the new Republican and Provincial Constitutions (1963) which clearly set out the rights of the handicapped. The *fourth period* in national legislative regulations began in 1974. Legislative action was entrusted to the republics and provinces as were field activities. 'Self-managing communities of interest' furnished material support for education in general and for education of the handicapped in particular. In some of the republics and provinces, special regulations govern the education of handicapped children and youth, while in others, certain articles deal with the specific aspects of such education. Even in those republics and provinces where special regulations exist concerning education of the handicapped, these are only supplements to the regulations relating to education in general.

Pre-school education

This field was only covered by federal regulations for the handicapped in 1974. In some republics these are presented as regulations for children's welfare, in others as regulations for education, and the remainder as regulations for social welfare of pre-school children. None of the republics has special regulations for handicapped pre-school children. Such children are covered by general regulations which require enrolment of the whole school-age population.

All articles relating to pre-school education embody the following rights for the handicapped:

- places in children's nurseries and kindergartens (for those with mild impairments);
- provision of aids (for audio and sight correction as well as to facilitate movement, etc.);
- special treatment in pre-school institutions (corrective activities, small groups, etc.);
- lodging and treatment in special institutions (for children with more serious handicaps).

Because of problems of transportation to kindergartens, lack of suitably trained staff, etc. very few handicapped children are able to take advantage of all the legal provisions made for them.

Special elementary schooling

Until 1960, there were no specific legal regulations regarding education of the handicapped at elementary level. All practical aspects of elementary schooling were covered by the Education Law and the Law Governing Financial Support for the School System.

In 1960-1961, regulations were introduced for a school system in accordance with the Education Law. These regulations contributed to the development and extension of the network of special schools and institutions in Yugoslavia, as well as to a greater intake of handicapped children. According to the Yugoslav Federal Constitution of 1974, legal regulation of education, including special education, is the responsibility of

the republics and provinces. In some of them new articles regulate special education, while in the others it is subject to regulations governing the elementary school system.

During the period 1976-1980, attempts were made to base elementary education of the handicapped on integrative principles in more developed parts of the country. In 1976, the term 'special education' was abandoned in legislation of the Republic of Slovenia and replaced by a law on the education of handicapped children. Integration of education was recognized by law as the most desirable form of education for handicapped children in 1980 in the Republic of Croatia. Under the Law on Education and Elementary Schooling (Article 27), pedagogical standards were laid down as the obligatory criteria for identification of specific educational needs related to handicapped children. The most noteworthy point of this law is contained in Article 144: 'Elementary schooling of handicapped children and youth is incorporated in the educational system as a whole. It is to be conducted in elementary schools through the application of suitable educational techniques and the creation of specific educational groups when necessary.' Another point to be noted occurs in Article 147: 'Criteria for the specific educational treatment of each individual child are established through systematic follow-up examinations which take place every year.'

Secondary specialized education

Secondary specialized education of handicapped students is regulated by laws in two ways: republican and provincial laws on specialized education and on pensions and invalid insurance. The first of these laws establishes the right of the handicapped to vocational training, while the second specifies the right to rehabilitation during education. Numerous facilities for handicapped adolescents are specified. For example, the law on specialized education of the Republic of Croatia, dated 1982, provides for:

- vocational training of handicapped students for simple occupations, even if they have not completed elementary education;
- schools for specialized education offering special programmes for the handicapped if required by the nature of the impairment, as well as vocational training for students with more serious mental and physical impairments;

- prolonged programmes of specialized education if necessary (twice as long as programmes for the non-handicapped).

The legislation in other republics also provides for a number of facilities for handicapped students. The law on the education of handicapped children and youth, for example, enacted in the Republic of Serbia in 1984, stipulates, in addition to the provisions mentioned above, smaller classes, special teachers, and specific teaching aids and accessories for rehabilitation in schools where the handicapped are educated. Where rehabilitation has made handicapped students capable of following normal curricula, provision is made for transition from special to regular schools. All the laws concerning specialized education offer the possibillity of theoretical courses in special schools and practice in work organizations where non-handicapped persons are also engaged. Those with sight impairments and serious physical handicaps have access to vocational training in special classes and workshops appropriate to the nature of their impairment.

Advantages and disadvantages of existing regulations for the education of handicapped students

Existing regulations in Yugoslavia reflect the values derived from social commitment. However, application of such regulations reveals a number of weaknesses. Many of the provisions contained in the regulations are partially or wholly inapplicable. It would seem that no suitable methodology was applied in the search for solutions. Those responsible for drafting the regulations often lack reliable data and proposed solutions have not always been verified through scientific research and have not taken community views into account. The proposed articles are presented to the public in almost final form so that experts from other than the legal field cannot participate. As a consequence, it is impossible to foresee the problems which may arise in applying the proposed solutions.

Lack of flexibility in the legal regulations governing education of the handicapped is a major source of difficulty. There is an excessive gap between the regular curricula which are designed for normally developed children capable of mastering the most complicated programmes and the curricula intended for children with serious handicaps. As a consequence, so-called 'borderline' cases are unsuccessful in regular schools (leading to

blockage of social and emotional development) where professional assistance is not in most cases provided. Such children have no real possibility to transfer from special to regular schools because of the considerably reduced programmes of the former. Only blind and other handicapped children with no mental impairment can follow the same programmes as those of regular schools and continue schooling with their non-handicapped peers.

Those responsible for drafting laws dealing with the education of the handicapped have no single conceptual document dealing with social commitment and its application in Yugoslavia as a whole. As a result, regulations vary greatly between regions, ranging from educational systems founded on the principle of integration to completely isolated educational sub-systems. The best index of the shortcomings apparent in the application of the various articles is the low enrolment rate of handicapped children. Although all handicapped pre-school children have the right to attend nurseries and kindergartens, only 1 per cent actually do so. Similarly, elementary education is *compulsory* for all children, including the handicapped, but it is estimated that only 15 per cent of handicapped children in fact attend special schools. The rest are enrolled in regular schools, but are almost never provided with the conditions required for integrated education. It is also estimated that 80 per cent of all handicapped students who have completed special schools are competent to perform simple jobs. In spite of this, employment of vocationally trained handicapped youth occasions much concern in most regions of the country other than Slovenia.

Most laws related to the categorization of handicapped students contain articles allowing parents to refuse the recommendation of the categorization commissions that their children be sent to special schools. Research shows that most of the parents refusing such recommendations belong to the lower socio-economic and educational level. Parents at a higher socio-economic and educational level generally undertake to have their children educated in regular schools where the inadequacy of the conditions provided leads to relatively poor results. Some of these children are then transferred to special schools which occasions a variety of problems arising from adaptation to the new environment.

In most republics and provinces there is an awareness of the problems caused by inappropriate legal provisions. Tests are being conducted with a

view to making regulations meet the actual needs of handicapped children. It has become clear, however, that no significant advance can be made without more intensive development of scientific research, better articulation between regular and special schooling, and more functional ties between all institutions taking care of the handicapped.

SECTION III. ADMINISTRATION, ORGANIZATION

The organizational models of the education system in the various republics and provinces are practically identical and are essentially found in the following institutions:

- the Republican/Provincial Committee for Education (which is responsible for seeking systematic solutions in education, proposing laws in the field of education, co-ordinating educational sub-systems, etc.);
- the Republican/Provincial Parliament which establishes laws in the field of education, including special education. The Committee for Education is an operative board within the Parliament for the examination of the proposed articles (after they have been submitted for public consideration);
- the Republican/Provincial 'Self-Managing Community of Interest' for Elementary and Specialized Education (which takes care of finance, including education of the handicapped);
- the Republican/Provincial Office for Education (dealing with research activities in the field of education).
- the Republican/Provincial Council for Education (which is responsible for systematic solutions in education and examination of legal regulations and normative solutions as well as plans, programmes and textbooks for elementary and special education. Each Council for Education has a board for the education of handicapped students;
- Within the republics and provinces there are regional offices for education. The Committee for Education operates educational institutions in the cities. Within the cities and regions the 'self-managing communities of interest' are responsible for the financing of education.

Some of the institutions for the handicapped are the responsibility of the republics and provinces, others are established by city communities. The

originators of the institutions determine the finances and supervision. Each institution has staff to care for the handicapped but most activities are undertaken for the educational system as a whole. Health and social welfare of the handicapped are the concern of the Committee for Health and Social Policy as well as the 'self-managing communities of interest' for health, invalids and pension insurance.

This complex system for ensuring the health, education and social welfare of handicapped children in Yugoslavia makes it possible to meet requirements, but only on condition that its sub-systems are co-ordinated. At the conference in September 1985 on the functioning and improvement of education for the handicapped, it was noted that there was an inadequate degree of articulation between elements of the system. Yugoslavia is probably one of the few countries where there is no single institution for education at federal level. There are co-ordination boards such as the Inter-Republican/Provincial Commission for Education which meet from time to time to consider aspects of special education as well as committees for the 'Decade of the Invalid' (at federal, republican and regional levels). However, the way in which they are constituted, as well as the fact that they are only consultative or advisory bodies, make it impossible for them to function effectively or to exercise a real influence in respect of the serious problems which exist in this area. Other negative consequences arise from the lack of a permanent co-ordination board at federal level. There is no meeting place in which to discuss the numerous initiatives by humanitarian organizations or sections of the Socialist Alliance, the results of scientific research, or the views of the handicapped themselves and the professional staff responsible for their welfare. As a result, it is far from easy to effect changes in the system and to overcome the various problems. A further result is a lack of motivation to make fresh initiatives.

In some republics, however, interesting solutions have been introduced which might point the way to a better articulation between the constituent elements of the system as a whole. In Slovenia, for instance, a self-managing agreement between all institutions involved in the care of the handicapped has been concluded (education, health and social welfare, employment).

Action to solve different problems is carried out more rapidly, available material support is more successfully distributed, so that it may be claimed that this republic has achieved a level of protection and care of the handicapped in line with modern integrative processes. In the Republic of Croatia a separate 'self-managing community of interest' for specialized education of handicapped persons has been constituted.

The relationship between special and regular elementary schools

From the point of view of curricula, schools for the blind, partially sighted and physically handicapped children are very similar to regular schools. Differences exist only in those subjects which cannot be handled in the same way by both handicapped children who are not mentally impaired and by non-handicapped children. These are, more particularly, physical and technical education for blind children and physical education of physically handicapped children as well as music education for children with impaired hearing. The curriculum for deaf children is similar to that for the non-handicapped, but on a reduced scale. The basic difference between the special school mentioned and regular schools lies in the additional training given to teachers of handicapped children (as prescribed by law) or in the engagement of teachers specially trained for teaching the handicapped. Further, classes are considerably smaller in special schools (an average of six to twelve students) and special teaching methods and techniques are used (including appropriate teaching aids) making for more effective educational progress and the overall development of the child. Professionals in Yugoslavia are sharply divided as to whether or not special schools are more favourable than regular schools for the development of handicapped children which explains the existence of two parallel systems: Croatia has an integrated system whereas other republics have a separate system, while Slovenia combines elements of both.

The similarity of curricula for handicapped children without mental impairments and for non-handicapped children enables students of special schools to continue their studies in regular schools (at elementary level and above). Unfortunately, most of the reports from the republics and provinces indicate that transition from regular to special school often takes place in the case of unsuccessful students, but that transition from special

to regular school is very rare. Problems are particularly apparent in the fifth grade, when there is a transition from a homeroom system of teaching to subject-oriented teaching. The shift is characterized by a much more difficult curriculum in particular subjects and by contact with many more teachers, occasioning an abrupt decline in achievement among the handicapped children who have previously managed to adapt themselves to a single teacher. This leads to the so-called re-categorization process which takes such children to special schools. Conversely, there is an increasing number of students in the fifth grade of special schools. While the number of the students in some of the early grades does not exceed a handful, the number in the fifth grade is much higher, sometimes beyond the legally permitted maximum.

SECTION IV. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The categorization of handicapped children

In Yugoslavia, there are basically two ways in which a child is deemed to be handicapped and hence in need of help to satisfy his basic needs. In the first instance, the categorization takes place in medical institutions, and in the second results from observation in the first year of formal education. Broadly speaking, it may be said that this is the usual classification based on medical-psychological diagnosis, with elements of pedagogic assessment, as to the ability of the child to attend school with his non-handicapped peers. An educational procedure serves to furnish roughly equivalent data about the child but also has elements of diagnosis. An observational procedure is applied in Croatia, while categorization is the basis for sending children to special schools in other republics and provinces.

Yugoslav experts are currently debating possible ways of improving the categorization procedure. The most conspicuous weaknesses include insufficient professional training of categorization teams, poor selection of instruments for the assessment of personality traits, poor coverage of children in underdeveloped and mountain regions, as well as poor collaboration between medical and educational institutions. One of the suggested solutions for this problem is that developmental counselling services be established at health centres, as a basis for systematic work on

the diagnoses and follow-up of handicapped children. So far, there are five counselling services of this type in Belgrade and one in Zajecar.

One of the problems that arises in practical work relates to the question: when should a child be legally proclaimed handicapped? This dilemma has both humanitarian and professional aspects. It is well known that psychological assessment at an early age is not sufficiently reliable in determining the final mental status of an individual, but it is where mildly mentally handicapped children are concerned that the problem arises of late diagnoses and late rehabilitation work. On the other hand, premature labelling of the child as handicapped creates a trauma both for parents and for the child and hinders his social integration. However, only a decision on the categorization of the handicap provides a legal basis for helping the child, especially when there are no adequate institutions for rehabilitation in the child's home place.

The rights of categorized handicapped children are as follows:

- the right to education under special conditions;
- the right to an increased children's allowance;
- the right to professional medical and psychological protection and care free of charge;
- the right to full discretion regarding the diagnosis;
- the right to additional social protection and care, as well as the right to be placed in special institutions away from the place of residence if necessary for rehabilitation and education.

All republics and provinces provide for a compulsory medical check-up immediately after birth, at the end of the first and third year of age, as well as prior to attendance at pre-school and elementary school institutions. This makes it possible to identify developmental disturbances and to start rehabilitation sufficiently early. However, in most cases, the process of categorization is not carried out as legally prescribed. By way of example, an analysis conducted by educational supervising boards in the Republic of Serbia noted the following problems in the process of categorization:

- the enrolment of handicapped children by categorization covers only 20 per cent of the relevant population, while the remainder are classified for regular schooling without additional aids because of failure to respect the procedure;

- the categorization of handicapped children (mental disorders, blind and partially sighted, deaf and physically impaired) is not usually carried out until the start of the schooling.

Failure to initiate early rehabilitation is a major source of problems. Deaf children are particularly jeopardized in view of the fact that speech development is much more likely to provide incentives in early childhood than at the age of seven.

Material support for categorization commissions is provided by the communes in which they are established. This support covers expenses of commission members and transport costs for parents and their children if resident outside the location of the commission.

Parents' contribution to the categorization procedure consists of providing information to the team of experts about their children's developmental, behavioural and emotional disorders as well as about potentialities, particularly stressing unimpaired capabilities. As already mentioned, parents have the right to refuse the commission's recommendation to send their child to a special school. This is the source of particular difficulties in regard to children with a low level of achievement in regular schools since they must be re-categorized at a later stage and transferred to a special school.

The categorization procedure is mostly limited to intelligence tests (in the case of mental retardation) and evaluation of the degree of impairment (in the case of blind, partially sighted, deaf and physically handicapped children). Individual programmes for these children are not planned and realized (by teachers and psychologists if available) until schools are involved.

In regions where handicapped children are educated on the basis of integration, categorization is replaced by an observation procedure of the following type: should a doctor find during a check-up that a child has some psycho-physical handicap which might keep him from attending regular classes for more than one year, he has an obligation to inform the communal administrative authorities for education. The authorities then send the child for observation to the expert commission founded by the administrative authority for education and health for a group of communes. The expert commission comprises: a specialist in school medicine, an appropriate medical specialist, an educationist, a psychologist, a special

education teacher, and a social worker. When the commission considers that the child cannot follow regular curricula or cannot enrol in elementary school during that school year, it submits suggestions to the responsible authority for the group of communes as to type and duration of observation required.

When the commission affirms the necessity for observation, the handicapped child is generally sent to the school closest to his place of residence, if the school offers the necessary conditions for work with these children. The programme of observation is elaborated at the school, and comprises the following:

- follow-up of the child's achievement in respect of the educational curriculum;
- choice of specific methods and forms of work to be used in the course of observation;
- follow-up of the child's psychological and physical characteristics which are important for his school achievement;
- mode of co-operation between teachers and parents;
- time predicted for the observational programme.

Scientific institutions are engaged in preparation of the observation procedure. Observational instruments and techniques used in the Republic of Croatia are developed at the Faculty of Special Education of the University of Zagreb. Numerous difficulties were experienced in trying to apply the procedure in the legally prescribed way. A particular source of difficulty is the lack of appropriate methods and techniques (tests and scales) for assessment of personality traits among various categories of handicapped children at different ages.

The elementary education of handicapped children

Elementary education of handicapped children in Yugoslavia takes several organizational forms: (i) in most republics and provinces, there are special schools for specific types of handicap, e.g. the mentally handicapped, deaf, blind and physically handicapped; (ii) special classes at regular elementary schools are mostly organized for mentally handicapped children and less frequently for children with hearing impairments; (iii) handicapped children attend school together with non-handicapped children.

According to available date (Statistical Almanac of Yugoslavia), special education is provided in 543 elementary schools (including both special and regular schools with special classes) distributed as follows:

Table 1. Elementary special education in Yugoslavia

Republics and provinces	Number of schools	Number of students	Number of teachers
Yugoslavia	543	25,321	3,871
Bosnia and Herzegovina	172	4,616	582
Montenegro	12	442	85
Croatia	55	4,368	893
Macedonia	33	1,649	203
Slovenia	71	4,637	785
Serbia	200	9,573	1,323
Serbia (excluding Kosova and Vojvodina)	127	5,591	823
Vojvodina	63	3,456	431
Kosova	10	526	69

The data indicate that the network of special schools is not equally distributed on Yugoslav territory. Enrolment of the handicapped is particularly low in economically underdeveloped regions. In the Republic of Serbia, for instance, where the network of special schools is highly developed, most of these are situated in Belgrade (14 special schools and 41 special classes within 26 regular schools). On the other hand, there are no forms of elementary special education (special schools and special classes within regular schools) nor specially organized ways of helping handicapped students in 67 of the 112 communes in the Republic of Serbia. Handicapped students from the regions with no organized form of special education are obliged to go to other centres where such education exists and to live in boarding schools. The most numerous schools are those for the mildly mentally retarded, while schools for children with impaired hearing and speech are much rarer as are those for blind and partially sighted children (in the whole of the Republic of Serbia there are only two schools for the

blind and one for partially sighted children). As a consequence, all blind children are obliged to attend boarding schools and are thus separated from their families at the age of elementary school.

Significant changes in special schooling came about after it was legally decided that the criterion for enrolment in special schools should be an IQ of 69 instead of 79. As a result, a considerable number of children who would formerly have been placed in special schools are now attending regular schools without having had the necessary preparation. Special remedial programmes for handicapped students in regular schools have recently been introduced, but in most schools personnel and organizational difficulties make this impossible.

Subject curricula in special schools for blind, partially sighted and physically handicapped children are very similar to those in regular schools. Depending on the type of handicap, there are differences in programmes of physical, technical and art education. Programmes in schools for deaf children are somewhat shorter versions of those in regular schools but the subjects remain the same. Much greater differences between special and regular schools concern educational methods and techniques, class size and teaching aids. In addition to ordinary programmes, rehabilitation programmes are provided in special schools, mostly comprising speech and psycho-motoric exercises (as dictated by students' needs). There are also various sections for culture, techniques and sports.

In all the above-mentioned special schools, the entire curriculum from the first to the fourth grades is covered by a homeroom teacher (except for such subjects as art and physical education). From the fifth to the eighth grades, subjects are taught by a different teacher for each subject, except in schools for slightly mentally handicapped children where a combination of the two is practised.

Reports from educational inspection boards in almost all the republics and provinces have noted a number of unsolved problems. In spite of curricula designed to enable transition from special to regular schools after elementary schooling for all categories of handicapped children, the transition is not notably successful. As a rule, handicapped students who have completed elementary education in special schools have considerable difficulty in proceeding to secondary education with their non-handicapped peers. Even in schools where curricula are in principle equal (as in the case

of schools for physically handicapped children), curricula are in fact reduced, with a consequent difficulty for handicapped students in mastering the secondary school's curriculum. A further result is that the variety of occupations open to them is extremely limited (mostly simple manual tasks, as discussed in more detail in the section dealing with specialized education). Most of the problems emerge in the fifth grade of elementary school (when there is the change from homeroom to specialized teacher). At that age, the failure of the handicapped children in regular schools is particularly noteworthy, a fact which explains the high proportion returning to special schools. The number of students in special schools is minimal in the first grade whereas in the fifth grade the number is considerably increased (especially in schools for deaf and slightly mentally handicapped children).

One especially complex problem is related to the fact that the curriculum related to a specific subject is ill-adapted to the handicapped students' abilities. Directions for work with handicapped students recommend individualization of teaching in line with the student's abilities, but neither the psychological nor the didactic conditions exist to make this feasible. The problem of the motivation of handicapped children in regard to education is also to be noted. In spite of considerable efforts, the number of textbooks for these schools is not yet satisfactory. Although significant resources have been invested in this and numerous textbooks for special elementary schools published in most of the republics, the general opinion is that much remains to be done in terms of quantity and quality (compared to regular school textbooks), as well as in terms of adaptation to the particular features of each category of handicapped students.

In numerous special schools efforts are made to palliate the effects of separating handicapped children from their non-handicapped peers. Students in special schools participate in the celebrations of various holidays; sports are organized and games encouraged during recesses between lessons (especially when the special and regular schools are in the same building or share the same schoolyard). So far no reliable conclusions have been reached as to the effect of these initiatives on the integration of special schools within a broader social framework.

In addition to special schools, special classes for the handicapped exist in a number of regular schools. Teaching in these classes is organized on

the basis of the same curricula used for the same category of handicapped children in special schools. Special classes are mostly concerned with slightly mentally retarded children and children with hearing impairments. In a number of schools, certain activities (group work, sports, art) are organized for the handicapped and non-handicapped together. Investigations by the inspectorate, however, indicate an unsatisfactory situation in the special classes which by and large are poorly equipped with, among other things, teaching aids especially adapted to handicapped children, while the status of the special education teachers in these classes is also unsatisfactory.

The integration of handicapped students in regular schools

International public opinion concerning the integration of handicapped students in the regular school system has attracted close attention in Yugoslavia. The trend towards integration is in line with the social obligations set out in the Constitution and the specific laws and regulations. Parents and humanitarian organizations have shown particular interest in the movement towards integration which is also reflected in law. The decision that only children with an IQ of less than 69 should be sent to special schools for the handicapped has had as a result that two-thirds of the children who would have previously been recommended for special schools are now sent to regular schools. There has also been a decline in the number of new special schools and special classes in regular schools.

It rapidly became clear that regular schools were not prepared for work with the handicapped. Research has demonstrated the poor achievement of handicapped children in regular schools, as well as the lack of acceptance by their non-handicapped peers. Teachers were not trained to work with the handicapped, there were no appropriate teaching aids, etc. It is noteworthy that humanitarian organizations concerned with the blind have shown particular interest in integration, but few blind children have been able to join regular schools. Resistance to integration has also emerged among educationists and special education teachers.

In this situation, considerable differences between the different regions have developed in the approach to education of the handicapped. At the risk of oversimplifying, it may be said that three parallel systems now

exist in Yugoslavia: (1) in Croatia, the law requires that handicapped and non-handicapped be educated together in elementary schools, except in the case of students with multiple or very severe difficulties which hinder attendance at regular schools; (2) in Slovenia, the special schools and special classes in regular schools remain but are now designated as schools with 'adapted curricula'; (3) in Serbia, the special schools and classes remain but are mostly for children with more severe and multiple handicaps. For handicapped children attending regular schools, rehabilitation programmes adapted to the type of handicap and specific features of each child are planned although not as yet actually applied. In the rest of the country special schools and special classes have been retained.

The integration experiment in the Republic of Croatia has attracted much attention and has encouraged other republics (Slovenia and Serbia) to make a serious effort to accelerate the integration of the handicapped into schools for non-handicapped students. The legal basis for integrated education of handicapped children in Croatia can be found in the Law on Elementary Education enacted in 1980. This includes the stipulation that specific educational needs of handicapped children must be defined by pedagogic standards (Article 27). Article 144 stipulates that: 'The elementary education of handicapped children and adolescents forms part of the educational system and takes place in elementary schools with the aid of individualized methods, or, when necessary, in special educational groups in these schools.' Article 147 states that 'every year, based on continuous observation, [schools must] determine whether a given child still needs special conditions for education'. The law opens up the possibility of full integration of students who have demonstrated satisfactory achievement in regular schools during the observation period. For the other handicapped students (mostly those with more severe or multiple handicaps) there is the possibility of partially integrated education, special schools, individual work at home, as well as schooling in hospital for children hospitalized over lengthy periods. Education in hospitals and homes is practised not only in Croatia, but also in other regions, mostly in large cities where the appropriate personnel is available.

An annual global plan is designed to satisfy the special needs of handicapped students in regular schools. This is divided into monthly segments under which the teacher, educationist, psychologist and special

education teacher of the school meet each week to set individual tasks for the student in the light of achievement and any new problems which may have occurred. Extra work on the curriculum and certain remedial exercises (if necessary) are carried out with the child by a special education teacher. The practice has been to have one special education teacher work once a week with all children of the same grade level who require extra work. The programme of additional work with special education teachers so far exists for grades one to four, and is being prepared for grades five to eight.

The educational administration of the Republic of Croatia has followed the integration of handicapped students in regular schools systematically and critically. It has concluded that there are many problems pertaining to personnel and to organization. Many communes failed to plan for the transition from the special school system to the integrated system within the time legally prescribed. There is no systematic approach to the construction of educational materials and aids for handicapped children and schools did not recieve extra funds for this; transportation of children after school hours has not been satisfactorily organized. Despite these problems, however, a number of positive results have been obtained: (1) there is a significant change in the attitude of teachers towards handicapped children. They no longer ask whether integrated education is justified but how it can best be achieved; (2) the transition from elementary to specialized education has been made easier; (3) the negative effects of boarding school and separation from the family have been eliminated.

Secondary specialized education of handicapped youth

Secondary specialized education for handicapped youth is organized in the following ways:

1. In schools for specialized education, together with non-handicapped youth. This form is for those with mild handicaps who are motivated and able to benefit from vocational training and mostly comprises the blind, partially sighted and certain categories of physically handicapped children;
2. In special classes within regular schools for secondary specialized education;

3. In special schools for secondary specialized education (for deaf and partially hearing, blind and partially sighted, mildly mentally retarded and physically handicapped children);
4. In special institutions for the care of handicapped children and youth (boarding schools). These institutions are used for the vocational training of students with serious handicaps (moderately and severely mentally retarded, multiple handicaps, autism, etc.);
5. In hospitals and homes. The Law on Secondary Education in the Republic of Croatia (Article 88) plans the organization of instructional work in homes or hospitals. This form of specialized education is intended for physically handicapped and chronically ill youth.

The vocational orientation of students takes place in the last year of elementary school. It is conducted by the vocational orientation service in collaboration with the school psychologists (where these exist). Handicapped students also have the right to avail themselves of the professional orientation service free of charge. At the request of parents or the school for the handicapped, it is possible to organize an assessment of abilities by a team of experts, as well as the vocational orientation of these students. Students of special schools are required to undergo a systematic check-up in their final school year. The responsible body comprises a teacher, a psychologist, a specialist in industrial medicine, a specialist in the particular type of handicap, and a social worker. Before a final decision is reached, interviews are held with the parents and the student and their wishes are as far as possible taken into consideration.

A number of problems remain to be solved: a very small proportion of handicapped youth is enrolled by vocational orientation; the network of schools for the specialized education of handicapped adolescents who have completed elementary school is underdeveloped; there is a lack of instruments for assessment of vocational interests and abilities; there are no specialized personnel to deal with the vocational orientation of the handicapped; handicapped youths are not provided with adequate information on the occupations available to them, etc.

The general opinion is that the percentage of handicapped adolescents covered by secondary education and vocational training is largely unsatisfactory. There are no comprehensive data on the number of handicapped adolescents who have continued their education in regular

schools after completing special elementary schools. The only available data concern handicapped youth in special secondary schools and special classes of regular secondary schools. There are major differences between regions pertaining to the number of educational institutions for the vocational training of the handicapped, largely depending on whether the regions are developed or underdeveloped.

The general opinion is that the most highly developed system for the overall protection and care of the handicapped exists in the Republic of Slovenia. This is illustrated by the following data for 1986: there were then 3,971 students in all classes with adapted curricula in elementary schools. Elementary schooling was completed by 749 students in that year. Of these:

- 5 followed regular specialized education programmes;
- 77 followed shortened specialized education programmes (the electro-technical, agricultural, metal, chemical and construction trades);
- 74 followed adapted shortened secondary education programmes (the metal, lumber and textile trades);
- 30 attended special training organizations;
- 97 were trained in educational centres at places of work;
- 344 were immediately employed, and then continued their vocational training at their place of work;
- 35 went to work on family farms;
- 8 were trained at sheltered workshops; and
- 79 received no vocational training.

On the basis of these data, it will be seen that Slovenia has the widest range of forms of vocational training, and that most of these take place within the place of work, which allows for immediate employment after completion of training. The problem of co-ordinating those institutions designed to satisfy the special needs of the handicapped may be solved in a variety of ways. In Slovenia, the self-managing agreement among these institutions provides the basis for the integration of education, health and social protection and welfare, and employment of the handicapped. In Croatia, the 'self-managing community of interest' for the specialized education of handicapped persons was established in 1984. The task of the 'community' is to stimulate, follow-up and evaluate vocational training and orientation activities, as well as employment of the handicapped. A systematic registration of handicapped students at the existing centres for

specialized education in Croatia has been instituted. According to available data (1985), handicapped youths are currently educated at about 80 centres for specialized education in that republic, covering 80 occupations. During the school year 1984-1985, 3,848 handicapped adolescents were included in specialized education (1,956 of these were mildly or moderately mentally retarded or autistic, and 1,432 had hearing impairments). For students in regular secondary schools, an individualized procedure is practised, i.e. the curricula and teaching aids are adapted to the abilities of handicapped students. In cases where full integration is not feasible, partial integration programmes are planned, as well as education in special centres for the education of the handicapped, work at home and hospitals, and a number of other flexible solutions.

In spite of the good results achieved at the outset (and these concern only some of the regions, mostly urban and developed) numerous weaknesses have been revealed. They are briefly as follows:

- Most handicapped students come to secondary schools with insufficient prior knowledge. This is reflected in the students' lack of motivation and in the attitude of teachers and peers towards these students.
- The number of available occupations is far inferior to the abilities of many handicapped students. The insufficient training of teachers for work with these children is much more limiting than the handicap itself.
- There are many unresolved problems relating to didactic and teaching methods (adapting the curricula to the abilities of students, content and organization of additional work, etc.).
- A major problem concerns practical vocational experience. Work places are unwilling to take these students in to gain practical experience, and when they do accept them, the quality of instruction is poor since the instructors themselves have not been trained to work with these students.
- In most regions the involvement of handicapped youth in various forms of vocational training is reasonably satisfactory.

However, recognition of these problems is a first step towards their solution. The following results are worth mentioning: the growing interest of scientists in other fields (e.g. psychology and pedagogy) in the advancement of education for the handicapped; a series of initiatives aimed

at co-ordination of the work of educational, health and social institutions; a number of new and very flexible legal regulations which enable the adaptation of education to the needs and abilities of the handicapped; an increase in the number of original solutions to specific problems in the field (the mobile service for assisting the handicapped in Slovenia, programmes for training the blind to work with computers in Ljubljana and Sarajevo, etc.).

The curricula for the handicapped

The curricula in general, including the curricula for the handicapped, are determined by republican/provincial councils for education. They are prepared by experts of the republican/provincial offices for education. Professional and public views are sought through the Commission for Special Education (which is included in the Council for Education). During the preparation and design of the curricula, leading authorities from universities, experts in particular subjects, as well as those actually working with the handicapped, are consulted. However, despite this elaborate procedure and the involvement of numerous experts, many questions are left open. Existing programmes are mostly only simplified versions of regular school programmes or are programmes for the lower grades of regular schools used in the higher grades of schools for the handicapped.

One major difficulty arises from the fact that there is no research in the field of developmental and pedagogical psychology according to the various categories of handicap. Nor is there any linguistic data (concerning concepts, syntactical particularities, etc.) for each category of the handicapped at various ages, or pedagogic research dealing with numerous unresolved problems of didactic and teaching methods. These problems are reflected in the quality of textbooks for the handicapped population (aimed primarily at the special schools).

Teaching personnel

In the *special* elementary schools for the handicapped teaching is conducted by special education teachers, homeroom teachers and subject-specialized teachers. In the schools for mildly mentally retarded children there is a

combination of homeroom and subject-oriented teaching. During the whole period of eight-year schooling, teaching is carried out by special teachers for all subjects (except art, music, and physical education). Such schools include a number of homeroom teachers for the non-handicapped, but they are legally obliged to pass additional exams in order to work with mentally retarded children. In the other special schools for handicapped children without intellectual impairments, special education teachers as well as homeroom and subject-oriented teachers provide the instruction (from grades one to eight). Special education teachers are obliged by law to acquire additional training for teaching particular subjects in higher grades (from grades five to eight). In special boarding schools, educational activities are conducted by special teachers. Where these activities are carried out by personnel who have completed the 'teachers' academy' course (a two-year course for teaching the non-handicapped), they are obliged to complete additional courses to work with certain categories of handicapped children.

In the *secondary schools* with special classes for handicapped adolescents, teaching is conducted by teachers who are also responsible for the non-handicapped. These teachers are obliged to undergo additional training in order to work with certain categories of handicapped children. A number of subjects (general education) are handled by subject-oriented teachers and special education teachers.

Most of the special schools have a pedagogical and psychological service staffed by the professionals in these fields (regulations call for a psychologist and an educationist in each school but this situation only exists in large cities).

In regions where education for most handicapped students is carried out on the basis of *integration*, the handicapped are taught by teachers who also work with non-handicapped students. This is the case at both elementary and secondary levels. A special education teacher is engaged to help teachers in a number of schools.

Training of personnel for work in special education is organized as follows: special education teachers may be trained on two levels - through a two-year course in the 'teachers' academy' (in Slovenia) or through special two-year courses in special education (as previously in Croatia and Serbia). Most special education teachers are now trained at the Faculty of

Special Education. There are two faculties of this kind, one in Belgrade and one in Zagreb. Completion of secondary school or 'teachers' academy' is a prerequisite for entry into these faculties. The students are prepared for teaching or rehabilitation. Experience has shown that numerous changes in personnel training are necessary. Humanitarian organizations (the associations of the blind, deaf, physically handicapped) call for considerable changes of direction towards integration whereas the associations of special education teachers maintain that special schools are still the most suitable for the education of handicapped children.

Programmes for additional training of other professionals working with handicapped children, psychologists and educationists, have only recently been developed. Speech therapists are also trained at the Faculty of Special Education. They do not directly participate in the teaching process, but work within the pedagogical-psychological service or health organizations.

Teachers (trained in a 'teachers' academy'), psychologists and educationists (trained in the Faculty of Philosophy) have no special courses concerning handicapped children during basic studies. Plans have been made for additional training of educationists (at the Faculties of Philosophy in Belgrade and Zagreb) and psychologists (at the Faculty of Philosphy in Belgrade).

SECTION V. FINANCE

Financial support for pre-school as well as for elementary and secondary education of handicapped students (whether in special or regular schools) is the reponsibility of the 'self-managing community of interest' for elementary and secondary education and the 'self-managing community of interest' for children's welfare (for pre-school education). These are organized at the regional and municipal levels, while 'self-managing communities of interest' for secondary education are organized at the republican/provincial level. Most special schools are the responsibility of municipalities and regions although some (e.g. those for blind children) are within the competence of the republics. In the latter case, financial support is provided only for students from the territory of the republic in which the school is situated, while as regards the other students special contracts are established with the communes from which they come. In boarding

schools, board and lodging are provided by the 'self-managing community of interest' for social, pension and invalid welfare, and in some cases partially by parents.

Other direct forms of material support in addition to financial support for their schooling are provided to the handicapped. All handicapped children and youth have the right to a 30 to 50 per cent increase in children's allowance. If permanently handicapped, they have the right to material support throughout their lives. All handicapped persons have the right to a lifelong persion, except where they find employment after completing vocational training when they receive extra financial support in addition to their salaries. Legal provision is made for particular groups of the handicapped to import accessories and special equipment free of duty and taxes.

SECTION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

More intensive research on a wide range of problems in the education and rehabilitation of handicapped persons was begun after the creation of the Faculty of Special Education in Zagreb (1965) and in Belgrade (1975). Legal provisions for the schooling of handicapped children on an integrated basis had an especially stimulating effect on research in Croatia. The most important research in the field was carried out by Professor Stancic et al. (*The Study of the Objective and Subjective Conditions for the Integration of Handicapped Children in Regular Schools*). So far, eight reports have been published and several experiments carried out in schools with a view to verifying various solutions.

In 1983, a doctoral thesis dealing with the integration of handicapped students in regular schools was defended in Zagreb (Dr. Ana Sekulic-Majurec: *The Integration of Handicapped Students in Regular Schools*). In Slovenia, a number of papers have been published on the possibility of educating the handicapped and the non-handicapped together. A study entitled *The Education of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Children in the Process of Integration* by A. Zerovnik is of special importance. Research in Serbia has been undertaken to improve the assessment of personality traits of handicapped students. The Institute for Psychology of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade carried out a study entitled *The Handicapped*

Child during the period 1981-1986 (authors: S. Hrnjica et al.) which summarizes the results of applying various assessment techniques on handicapped students in elementary schools. A research project is currently under way in the Institute for Psychology entitled *Special Educational Work with Students Having Devlopmental Problems in Regular Elementary Schools*. The Faculties of Philosophy of Zagreb and Belgrade have initiated a national project dealing with the early rehabilitation of handicapped children and their preparation for education.

Scientific methodology is seen as an increasingly attractive means of regulating problems in the field, which considerably expands the possibility of finding more effective solutions to various problems. Research is particularly concerned with the advancement of work with handicapped children in the underdeveloped regions of the country. It is for this reason that the above projects are aimed at elaborating procedures for work with handicapped students in regions where team work is not possible.

SECTION VII. VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

A number of humanitarian organizations aim to help and care for various categories of handicapped persons through voluntary work. After the Second World War, voluntary organizations for the care of war invalids were established, followed by associations of the blind and deaf. Subsequently, associations for the care of the mentally retarded as well as those with muscular dystrophy or paraplegy came into existence. These different organizations have carried out numerous tasks:

- informing handicapped persons and their families of their rights and helping them to realize those rights;
- helping in founding special institutions for the handicapped, as well as helping to change attitudes towards the handicapped. Voluntary organizations have been particularly active in the application of new ideas concerning integration of the handicapped in schools and work places;
- determining the aids needed for various categories of the handicapped, thereby contributing significantly to the integration of handicapped students in schools;

- initiating and organizing cultural, art and sport activities. Some organizations (notably the Yugoslav Association of the Blind) have been particularly effective in satisfying cultural, sport and other needs of the handicapped under integrated conditions;
- helping their members to find employment, as far as possible working with non-handicapped persons.

SECTION VIII. PARENTS

There are no systematic data concerning ways in which the parents of handicapped children and youth are assisted. As a rule, the work programmes of all those in health or educational institutions include collaboration with the parents as essential. This collaboration is initially assured by pediatricians in local health institutions and subsequently by professional staff working in institutions for the early rehabilitation of handicapped children. Many rehabilitational programmes are designed to involve parents who are called on to play a major role.

The parents of handicapped children are actively involved in the categorization procedure by furnishing information about their child and indicating the difficulties encountered and particular achievements. As already mentioned, the parents have the right to refuse the recommendation of the categorization commission that their child be sent to a special school.

However, it is generally considered that the help extended to parents of the handicapped is inadequate. Contact with parents whose children are in boarding schools is particularly poor, especially where parents from socially deprived environments are concerned. Their interest in the child's education and the fulfilment of his potentialities is considerably reduced as is their material support for additional help to the child in rehabilitation centres.

SECTION IX. ISSUES

A number of conferences have taken place with a view to encouraging national projects for the advancement of work with the handicapped, including their education. At a conference which took place in Belgrade in

September 1985 it was agreed that there was a highly developed network of health, social and educational institutions taking care of the handicapped, but that co-ordination of all of those activities was lacking and that no single conceptual basis existed. It was noted that there was a legal foundation for integration of the work in this field. The following proposals were made:

1. A single co-ordination board should be set up at federal level to verify the fulfilment of the concept of education, to initiate and direct research in the field, as well as to help implement new internationally accepted ideas for the integration of the handicapped within educational and health institutions;
2. An operative board should be charged with the task of devising a single educational concept for the handicapped to be applied throughout Yugoslavia;
3. A single plan should be drawn up for scientific co-operation and the establishment of research priorities in order to bring about overall progress in the field;
4. Legal regulations should be initiated in collaboration with scientific institutions and leading experts in the field, as well as humanitarian organizations.

Collaboration has so far been mostly among scientific institutions (faculties, institutes, and health organizations dealing with the handicapped). A co-ordination board has been formed and has concluded that research work in the field must be stimulated. It is planned to evaluate programmes for early rehabilitation, as well as to consider their effectiveness as regards facilitating integration of the handicapped in the educational system. Collaboration in the preparation of curricula and textbooks must also be undertaken. At the republican level, considerable efforts have been made to integrate separate entities (education, social protection and welfare, health) in a single functional whole.

Yugoslavia is particularly interested in international co-operation. This might begin with a simple exchange of information, including studies and solutions applied in other countries, to be followed by direct co-operation between scientific institutions with a view to solving the various problems in this field.

FINAL REMARKS

Many problems exist in regard to education of the handicapped in Yugoslavia, but there is great interest on the part of the handicapped themselves, their parents, humanitarian organizations and scientific institutions in finding solutions. In this connection, the help of the international community would be of particular value, hence the emphasis in this report on the actual problems encountered so that through the exchange of experience the most effective solutions may be devised.